

CLAIMS

1. In a system comprising a plurality of consumers of one or more common resources, a method of tracking usage of the one or more common resources, comprising the steps of:

- 5 from each consumer, broadcasting to each of the other consumers a value indicative of an amount of the one or more resources consumed;
- at each of the consumers, receiving the broadcasted values from the other consumers; and
- in each consumer, storing a record of the total of the values that the consumer broadcasted and the values received from the other consumers.

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2. A method according to claim 1, wherein a memory stores a total indicative of the sum of all values broadcast by the consumers, the method further comprising the steps of, for each of at least a plurality of the consumers:

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 performing an authenticated read of the total in the memory;

 comparing the total in the consumer's record with the total read from the memory; and

 in the event the totals do not match, performing an action.

3. A method according to claim 2, wherein the memory is in one of the consumers and comprises that consumer's record.

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4. A method according to claim 2, wherein the action includes halting printing and or outputting an error message;

5. A method according to claim 2, wherein the values are broadcast in a non-secure manner.

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6. A method according to claim 6, wherein the value is signless, thereby preventing recredititing of the total in the memory.

7. A method according to claim 1, wherein the consumers are printer controllers.

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8. A method according to claim 7, wherein each of the printer controllers controls printing to a different part of print media to be printed.

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9. A method according to claim 7, wherein the resource is ink and the one or more values represent one or more corresponding inks consumed by one or more printheads associated with the printer controllers.